

Chronic Illnesses - Asthma

Definition

Asthma is a chronic lung disease caused by airway inflammation, which causes airflow obstruction.

How are we doing?

As of 2001, about 5% of Utahns are under medical care for asthma (Utah Health Status Survey 2001). This represents a slight increase in asthma prevalence from previous study's finding (Utah Health Status Survey 1996: 4%). Since 1995, Utah's hospitalization caused by asthma has slightly declined (Utah Hospital Discharge Data 1995-2000). This may indicate higher use of medication and lower occurrence of hospitalization by persons with asthma. During 2000, 2.3 persons per 10,000 adolescents were hospitalized because of asthma. 0.5% of all adolescent(ages 15-19) hospitalization is caused by asthma with 3 days stay in hospital and \$4,500 total charges on average.

How does Utah compare with the U.S.?

During 2000, asthma-related hospitalization comprised about 0.7% of all hospitalizations in Utah, while nationally, 1.3% of all hospitalizations were due to asthma (National Hospital Discharge Survey 1999, Utah Hospital Discharge Data 2000). Utah's death rate caused by asthma has been lower than the national rate since 1995 (National Center for Health Statistics, Utah DOH Vital Statistics via Action 2000). In Utah, 63% of all adolescents hospitalized during 2000 due to asthma were female, while 37% were male patients. Nationally, 66% of all adolescents hospitalized because of asthma were female.

Why is it important?

Asthma is one of the 10 leading chronic conditions that restrict activity. Approximately 15 million people in the United States are reported to have asthma. Among those, 5 million are children. Asthma is a leading cause of missed schooldays within the United States. It is estimated that more than \$6 billion is spent for asthma care each year. Every year, more than 10 million school days are missed and more than 5,000 persons die because of asthma. Asthma morbidity and mortality are largely preventable with improved patient education and clinical management.

What are the risk factors?

Risk factors for asthma include:

- Genetic predisposition
- Indoor environmental exposures

Adolescent Health Report

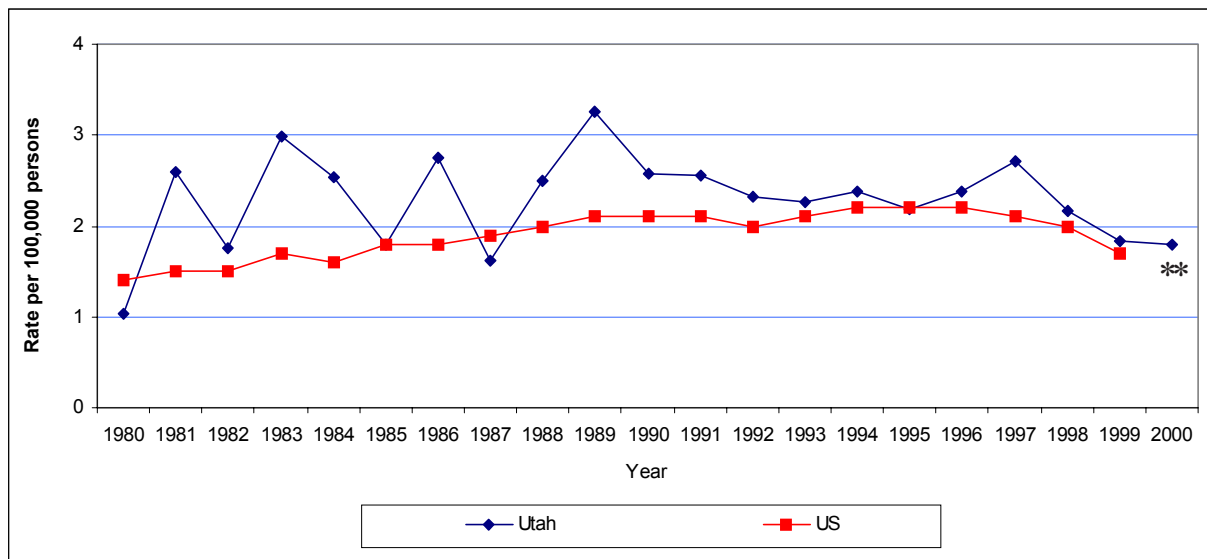
- Airtight building construction
- Immune system
- Diet
- Obesity and exercise

Within the United States, persons suffering from asthma vary in terms of age, gender, race, and ethnicity. During 2000, approximately 4% of all asthma-related hospitalizations in Utah were among adolescents. Asthma prevalence and rates of emergency department visits were higher for boys through childhood and early adolescence. However, among adolescents hospitalized with asthma, 63% were female.

What is being done?

Surveillance information on asthma is not readily available at the state or local level. The Utah Department of Health created the Utah Asthma Program in 2001 in order to develop a reliable asthma surveillance system and community network for asthma control in Utah. When established, the asthma surveillance system will develop a more in-depth understanding of the asthma burden in Utah. It will also identify population sub-groups that are at higher risk of asthma. The Utah Asthma Program will work with medical providers, community leaders, schools, and employers to create and enhance effective interventions to prevent and control asthma.

Asthma Mortality Rates* Utah and US: 1980 - 2000



* Rates for Utah and US have been age-adjusted to the 2000 US standard population

** 2000 US Asthma Mortality data not available.

Note: Utah mortality rates are based on small numbers

Source: National Center for Health Statistics, Utah DOH Vital Statistics via IBIS